

Hatchery Highlights

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Iron River NFH News and Updates Summer 2005



Topics this month: *Shocking Schacte Creek *Coasters to Red Cliff *House Cleaning
*Iron River NFH Joins the Parade *YCC Crew Helps Out *Hatchery Open House
*Brood Fish Come Home *Friends Group at Fishing Contest



SPRING SHOCKING AT THE IRON RIVER NFH!

Biologists Frank Stone (Ashland FRO) and Nikolas Grueneis captured (via backpack shocking) wild trout from Schacte Creek. This collection effort was targeted primarily for brook trout found within a three-quarter mile section, upstream of the fish barrier. Because the creek is the primary source of water for the hatchery, it's essential to reduce wild fish stocks to a minimum to minimize the potential for transferring pathogens to the hatchery's fish. A total of 113 brook trout, ranging from 2.0- 9.5" were transferred downstream of the hatchery fish barrier and released.

COASTERS HAVE NEW HOME



Biologist Steve Redman helps the coasters get used to their new environment.

Approximately 1,000, two inch coaster brook trout were recently transferred to the brand new Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility. These fish are the first inhabitants in this state-of-the-art aquaculture research and demonstration facility capable of raising warm, cool and coldwater fish species with various needs. The rearing facilities include a bell jar incubation system, a heath tray incubation system, several recirculation aquaculture systems (RAS) and a hydroponic plant area. The entire system is monitored by a SCADA computerized control program, which controls pumps, water usage, flow, and security. The University of Wisconsin System designated UW Superior to oversee the development of the facility, with input from a broad based advisory committee whose membership included community, industry, tribal, state and federal entities. The facility is located approximately, 40 miles from the Iron River Hatchery, and 1.5 miles north of the Red Cliff Tribal Administration. The complex is located on tribal land, through a

long-term lease agreement with the University of Wisconsin. Initial construction began in the spring of 2003 and was completed in the spring of 2005 for Phases I and II. Phase III consists of a future administration/classroom facility linked to the Aquatic Hatchery Facility. The Iron River National Fish Hatchery is looking forward to developing a long standing relationship with this new and innovative facility.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING??

The staff at the Iron River Hatchery have gone way past the extra mile in a clean- up, fix-up effort to shine up the entire facility in preparation for the August 13 dedication of the two new fish rearing buildings. Kurt Schilling, assistant manger, as well as the rest of the staff have taken on some building maintenance jobs in the absence of a staff maintenance worker. This of course, is in addition to keeping the fish growing and healthy. The assistance of our two state program workers, Katie Jardine and Duane Simpson has been invaluable. They are two very flexible jack-of -all-trades that have become a very important part of our staff. The something Kurt was looking for was teamwork – and he found it!



Asst. Project Leader Kurt Schilling replaces some ceiling tiles.

STRIKE UP THE BAND



Iron River National Fish Hatchery recently participated in the annual Iron River Blueberry Festival parade. Biologist Steve Redman drove the 3,000 gallon tanker truck that was used to assist in the distribution of over 4.1 million lake trout in the upper Great Lakes this past spring. Biologist Nick Grueneis rode along to assist in the "distribution" of goldfish crackers! Kids young and old love a parade and this was a great opportunity to increase public awareness, especially for the Aug. 13th open house, and gather community support for the fish hatchery.

WELCOME HOME!

In the fall of 2003, staff from Iron River National Fish Hatchery sailed out with the Wisconsin DNR to the Apostle Islands in Bayfield, Wisconsin. Accompanying the DNR on their fall survey for lake trout, Biologists John Johnston and Angela Baran spawned wild lake trout caught in the gill nets. The Wisconsin DNR recorded the statistical information on the fish; length, weight, lamprey scars, etc, before a small amount of eggs and milt were collected and the fish was released back into the lake.

The eggs from each pair of fish were kept in separate containers and even incubated separately for genetic purposes. Wild eggs are periodically collected to keep the genetic stock diverse. The eggs from over 100 pairs contributed to the new group of brood fish. The eggs were taken right off the boat to Keeweenaw Bay Indian Community Tribal Hatchery to be kept in isolation for at least a year and a half to make sure the fish tested disease free. The KBIC Tribal Hatchery has an isolation facility completely separate from the rest of the hatchery to prevent any diseases from coming into the hatchery and contaminating their fish. An agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Keeweenaw Bay Indian Community allowed for the isolation of wild fish and eggs in exchange for training KBIC employees and stocking lake trout in the tribal waters. On July 28th, 2005, the yearling fish were collected from the KBIC Tribal Hatchery and transported to Iron River NFH. These fish will be kept on site for approximately 10 years and will start producing eggs in 3 years. A



This young helper grabs a "big" net full!

small ceremony commemorated the event and invited the public to get up close and personal with the fish and to learn about the lake trout restoration program. After the fish were removed from the station, a total disinfection of the facility was completed to prepare it for other fish.

WE CAN NOW GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

On a clear, warm day on June 17th, the Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery held a working meeting at the Iron River NFH. Ten members attended with cutting tools and delicious foods. The group split up into two groups and set out to clear some neglected trails on the hatchery ground in order to open them up for educational tours, hiking, bird watching, hunting, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Portions of old overgrown trails were cleared to allow for easy access to all levels of hikers and to allow for possible access of a snowmobile to groom for cross-country skiing. After the two crews finished their assigned tasks of brush cutting and removal of fallen trees they gathered back at the hatchery and fired up the grill for a pot luck dinner. At the end of a day full of good friends, good food and good fun a brief official meeting was held. All of the participants agreed that since everyone had so much fun and so much was accomplished that the next meeting would be set up the same way and anyone who would like to join in the fun and see what there all about is invited to participate.

YCC CREW PROVIDES VALUABLE ASSISTANCE

A Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Crew worked for three days in June and one day in August providing valuable labor to the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. The YCC crew is partially funded by the hatchery and shared with the Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge. June activities focused on pruning, brush clearing, and stump removal along recently established hiking/ski trails throughout the hatchery property. The trail maintenance added to work already done by the Friends of The Iron River National Fish Hatchery earlier in the month. August activities focused on helping hatchery biologists move fish from the hatchery building to the production building. The YCC Crew completed nearly 160 hours of labor during their visit. This continues to be an excellent program for the Hatchery, and we really appreciated all the hard work.



CELEBRATION TIME!



Iron River National Fish Hatchery hosted an open house to dedicate the new production and brood stock buildings and opened them officially with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The construction project finished last fall and both buildings survived their first snow season without incident! These new buildings replaced the two air-filled domes. The domes covered the raceways, protecting the fish from sun damage and predators, but failed six times due to heavy snow loads. The open house hosted many of our partners who came with displays and information. Iron River NFH would like to thank: Gary Cholwek from the USGS Lake Superior Station, Roger Gordon from Genoa NFH, Tracy Roessner from Pendill's Creek/Sullivan's Creek NFH Complex, Ken Phillips, Corey Puzach and Ashley Umberger from LaCrosse Fish Health Center, Glenn Miller from the Ashland FRO, John and Denise Johnston from Jordan River NFH and Gregg Baldwin and Bob Kahl from Marquette

Biological Station for bringing their eye-catching displays and information about their programs! We would also like to thank Karen Graaf from Senator Feingold's office, Representative Gary Sherman and Gerry Jackson for speaking at the event. Approximately 200 people attended the afternoon event, many asking when we will be having our next open house!!! (Stay tuned for that announcement!)



FRIENDS AT FATHER'S DAY FISHING CONTEST

The Friends of the Iron River National Fish Hatchery set up an information table, with consent from the town and the local Lions club, at the annual Father's Day fishing contest in Port Wing, WI. The annual event raises money for the local Lions club and provides a lot of fun for all those who participate. Members from the friends group greeted out going and incoming fishermen at the public boat launch on Lake Superior with free hot coffee, warm cinnamon rolls, and information about the Iron River NFH and its friends group. Information was given to the fishermen about the probable origins of the fish they were bringing in (hatchery or wild) and the ages of the hatchery fish based on the presence or absence of fin clips and the location of the clip.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Iron River National Fish Hatchery
10325 Fairview Rd.
Iron River, WI 54847
715-372-8510 Fax 715-372-8410
<http://midwest.fws.gov/IronRiver/>

TO: